



County FA Disciplinary System for Small-Sided Football

Areas of responsibility

A County FA shall only sanction a Small-Sided Competition if it can be demonstrated that a robust disciplinary procedure is in place. 'Less serious' offences should be dealt with immediately by the organisers of the competition or tournament. However, County FAs should be informed by the Match Official or the Competition Organiser of all offences that would normally carry a 35-day suspension or above:

- Serious Foul Play
- Kicking or striking another player
- Use of offensive or insulting or abusive language or gestures directed at match officials
- Spitting
- Head butting
- Assault
- Refusing to leave the field of play when ordered
- Causing a match to be abandoned
- Any offences where the offender has also acted in a discriminatory manner for reasons of ethnic origin, colour, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability

Reporting of 'serious' Red Card Offences to the County Football Association

In order to promote the reporting of serious offences to the County FA all affiliated competitions should adopt the use of a standardised reporting form which clearly indicates to the Match Official those offences which are the concern of the competition organiser and those which should be referred to the County FA disciplinary process.

A copy of the form "Small-Sided Football Disciplinary Report" can be downloaded from the website www.cambridgeshirefa.com or obtained from the County Headquarters office.

Remit of Disciplinary Action

County FA disciplinary action arising from such offences applies to both 11-a-side and Small-Sided Football.

Red cards administered in Small-Sided Football for offences, which would normally carry a suspension of less than 35 days are the responsibility of the organiser to deal with according to The FA's recommended tariff of suspensions. Suspension for offences of less than 35 days would only apply to Small-Sided Football.

If a player is suspended from 11-a-side for less than 35 days this suspension only applies to 11-a-side Football.

As County FAs will only be dealing with serious offences that carry a suspension of 35 days and above, County FAs will not take into consideration any disciplinary action that the Small-Sided Competition or Centre may have taken on their own initiative. Operators should administer a 'match' suspension system whereas a County FA will employ a 'suspension period' as disciplinary action will apply to all categories of football.

Issuing of Cautions and Introduction of 'Timed Suspensions'

In Small-Sided Football yellow cards and associated cautions are no longer employed. Referees should instead employ a blue card for a cautionable offence. The issuing of a blue card indicates that the recipient will serve an immediate 'timed suspension' ('sin bin').

The options for disciplining offenders are therefore as follows

1. Player shown a blue card and temporarily suspended from play
2. Player issued with a discretionary second blue card and temporarily excluded from play
3. Player issued with a red card and permanently excluded from play

A blue card offence should always be accompanied by a temporary suspension from play.



The period of timed suspension in Small-Sided Football is a recommended two minutes. The release of players from a temporary suspension should be at the direction of the Referee or a Match Official if one is available.

The only exception to the use of the blue card and temporary suspensions is the situation whereby the suspension of a player cannot be monitored as the playing facility - such as an enclosed sports hall or complex of playing cages - does not allow the suspended player to remain adjacent to the pitch and within the eye line of the Match Official. In such circumstances players should be cautioned with a yellow card and remain on the pitch unless permanently excluded

Viability of a match

If in a Small-Sided Game (5, 6 or 7-a-side) one team is permanently reduced by more than two players the match shall be abandoned. This does not apply if a team has players that are only temporarily excluded.

Match Suspension Tariff

Organisers should employ the following tariff of suspensions for less serious offences that would normally carry a suspension of less than 35 days.

Offence	Penalty (to be administered by Small-Sided Operator)
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Receiving a second 'blue card' in the same match	1 Match suspension
Denying a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity	1 Match suspension
Use of offensive, insulting or abusive gestures	2 Match suspension
Attempting to kick or strike another player	3 Match suspension

Personal Liability for Disciplinary Offences

If a player is fined and leaves the club (i.e. no longer plays for the team) the individual should retain responsibility for the payment of a fine, rather than his former team, and should be suspended from all forms of football until the fine is paid.

Implementation of Disciplinary Procedures

A robust disciplinary process can only operate if a record is kept of the identity of participating teams and players.

All organisers should provide details of participating teams, team contact and affiliation 'slot' number to the County FA prior to the beginning of a competition (Form D). Organisers should ensure that these details remain updated

In addition Organisers should identify a system whereby the identity of participating players is recorded prior to a game commencing. These records should be retained by the Organisers and referred to in the event of a serious incident or on suspicion that a player is playing whilst under suspension.

The existence of these systems shall be a requirement before a County FA will provide sanction to a competition taking place.

Working relationships between the FA and Competition or Tournament Organisers

In order for an effective discipline, affiliation and referees appointment procedure to exist a good working relationship should exist between the Competition Organiser and the County FA.

County FA's and Competition Organisers should establish a 'Heads of Agreement' document which identifies the responsibilities of each party in relation to maintenance of discipline and affiliation processes.